



**OFFICE OF  
INSURANCE COMMISSIONER**

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ADVISORY**

**T 04-01**

TO: All Property and Casualty Insurance Insurers

SUBJECT: Automobile Insurance Coverage for Returning Armed Forces Members

DATE: May 27, 2004

The Office of the Insurance Commissioner has received information indicating some automobile insurers ("insurers") are denying reinstatement, refusing to write, or raising premium rates for members of the Armed Forces who are returning from active service. These individuals discontinued or otherwise modified their automobile insurance coverage here in Washington while in active military service overseas.

The Insurance Commissioner is aware that some insurers are not applying their continuous coverage underwriting and rating standards to policyholders who are on active military service. These insurers are commended for their actions; they are role models for the industry.

Underwriting and rating standards often appropriately take into consideration whether the insurance applicant has had continuous insurance coverage. In this instance, however, these underwriting requirements are inappropriate and should be waived. These servicemen and women, who have risked their lives on behalf of and in defense of our country, should not be penalized for their service.

The Insurance Commissioner is issuing this advisory to request that all insurers waive any such underwriting or rating requirements for returning members of our Armed Forces. If a member of the Armed Forces was a policyholder in good standing at the time of leaving for active duty, and can show proof that such active service was the reason for the loss in continuity of insurance coverage, the Insurance Commissioner requests insurers reinstate the policies and treat the servicemen and women as if their coverage was continuous.

The Insurance Commissioner asks for similar consideration for returning members of the Armed Forces who are new applicants to the insurer. If an applicant was in good standing with another insurer prior to leaving for active duty, and such active service was the reason for the loss in continuity of coverage, the insurer should treat the applicant as if they had continuous insurance coverage throughout their term of active duty.

If you have any questions regarding this advisory, please contact Scott Jarvis, Deputy Commissioner for Consumer Protection, at 360/725-7262 or [ScottJ@oic.wa.gov](mailto:ScottJ@oic.wa.gov).